

Washington, April 13th. 1853.

My Dear Sir. I do not know whether I wrote to you stating the fact, that one of the first acts of Col. Jefferson Davis, the present Secretary of War, on coming into office, was to countermand an order which was issued in the last hour of Mr. Conrad's administration of the War Dept., intended to force me (& perhaps Maj. Emory also) to place our collections in natural history within the reach of Mr. Bartlett, to be used by him for making out the book he intends writing. - That order I never noticed, for its fair construction was that I should make my report to, & hold my collections subject to, the disposition of, the Dept. of the Interior. I would not have objected to this, under a Secretary of the Interior disposed to shew fair play.

But the order was countermanded, leaving every thing as it was in the beginning of my service on the Board's Commission.

The debate in the Senate ^{on the 5th inst.,} in regard to this matter, contained in the accompanying number of the Daily Globe of the 9th inst. will show you how well this attempt to poach on the labors of others was understood by that body.

Mr. B. has chosen to assail me, without any just grounds, in the N. York Herald, a journal in which I have been forced to appear, with great reluctance, in my defence, over my own signature. My article is in that paper of last Monday the 11th inst. - No one could regret, more than myself, a contest through the medium of a newspaper. It is a thing entirely new to me, & not at all to my taste. Still a man must defend himself when assailed.

I trust my friends, & the public, will

perceive in my official report, published by the Senate (Doc. 121-32^d Cong. 1st Session) a complete refutation of all that ~~with~~ Mr. Stuart, & Mr. B. have said or can say. That defence was made in the presence of the administration which upheld General Boudé (my antagonist on the rights of our respective Countries) and Mr. B. who had been completely outwitted by him. In the very presence of, & under all my official responsibilities to, the Executive that caused me to be rebuked for having faithfully performed my duty to my own Country. I cannot go over the same ground in the newspapers. I do not think it would comport with my position as an Army officer to become a newspaper hero, and I do not know that I shall answer any thing more in the newspapers.

I hope next session your labors & those of Messrs. Baird & Girard will be published as they deserve. I will make a further report to the Depart^t. of the Interior to cover

the matter officially. Where is Mr. Wright
now. I will send him this debate if I can
get his address.

The present Commissioner, General Campbell,
is a very efficient, gentlemanly man, & I
have no doubt he will very much improve
the tone of that Commission, & at the
same time promote every branch of Scientific
research, as far as may be in his power.

I remain, Dear Sir, very
truly, with sincere regard,
Yours,
J. D. Graham

Prof. Asa Gray
Cambridge, Mass.